

KANSAS CITY DISTRICT'S NEWS MAGAZINE

HEARTLAND ENGINEER



www.nwk.usace.army.mil

APRIL - MAY 2016

*Spring
is here!*

Think and practice safety

Q&A

If you were asked who your favorite Asian-Pacific American personality is, who would you choose and why?



Nicole Hernandez
Administrative Assistant

Dr. Feng Shan Ho - Diplomat

As a Chinese Diplomat in Vienna, during World War II, he went against his boss' orders and began issuing Jews visas to Shanghai, allowing thousands of Jews to leave Austria and escape death. He was a hero but unknown, even by the people he saved.



Mark Asbury
Security and Law Enforcement

Secretary of Veteran Affairs retired U.S. Army General Eric K. Shinseki.

Wounded twice in Vietnam, he continued faithful service with his disability to become the Army Chief of Staff, from 1999 to 2003. Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, he led the Army's efforts for Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. He continues his devotion to soldiers and service members as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.



Ronschall Love
Mission Support Office

Reality TV star, fashion model and CEO for Phat Fashions Kimora Lee Simmons.

She's an entrepreneur with a diva attitude, teaching her daughters both business and fashion.



Jimmie Pulliam
Supply Technician

Secretary of Veteran Affairs retired U.S. Army General Eric K. Shinseki.

He's a role model for any American. He provided great military leadership in a time when America needed it most. Now he is even more beneficial to the country as the head of the V.A. with true life experience and wounds from combat, he can relate to what they're going through.

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ON THE COVER: When you make your vacation and recreation plans this year keep safety in mind as this mother does.

SPRING FORWARD

Last year in the April edition of the Heartland Engineer I wrote that from many perspectives, this period in our history and this time of year remind me of how special it is to be a member of the Corps; That very sentiment reverberates this year as I'm again awed by the outstanding performance and devotion demonstrated by the Kansas City team.

It has been a little more than a year since we executed our first American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, or "stimulus," contract. To date, we've executed approximately 200 contract actions worth more than an astonishing \$329 million. Keep in mind that the ARRA mission was in addition to the already arduous workload of those executing these contracts. Simply amazing!

Within the District, stimulus funds helped to jumpstart a weary economy, created or maintained hundreds of jobs and provided much needed Civil Work and Environmental improvements to our aging infrastructure and damaged lands.

I'd like to recognize those who took on the ARRA mission and integrated and balanced this additional workload. Congratulations to both the Contracting team and to all the Lake Project Office's for tirelessly negotiating and executing these actions.

We're well into the third quarter and I'd like to emphasize a few of my priorities, as I feel they are important in keeping the District on a planned path for success. We will continue our AED support, keep high priority MILCON and Civil projects on track, plan for, respond to and recover from flood events, emphasize safety at all levels, conduct high-quality MRAPS scoping meetings and continue with District transition planning.

Spring is here and we're again reminded of the potential for severe weather across the Midwest which could challenge our District reservoir and levee systems. Again we look to the ever-vigilant first responders in the Emergency Operations Branch to act with flood fight assistance, and if needed, repairs to critical flood risk management structures. Each year at this time their efforts prevent millions of dollars of damage to homes, businesses and farms.

Finally, spring begins the navigation, construction and recreation seasons. I appeal to you to not only keep safety in mind, but to frequently share safety practices and messages among the team and when appropriate to those recreating at our projects. Unfortunately, this year we've already suffered several drownings. I can't tell you how deeply I'm saddened each and every time I'm informed that a precious life was needlessly taken. Please, always **THINK** and **PRACTICE SAFETY** and enjoy the season.



Col. Roger A. Wilson, Jr.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Wilson", written over a faint background of a calendar grid.

Engineer Chief: ‘Achieving the Vision’ takes irreversible momentum

*Story and photos by Luke Waack,
Assistant Editor, The Guidon*

The annual U.S. Army Engineer School force conference ended Saturday, but the topics of discussion and decision making process will move forward as the regiment’s campaign plan develops, key leaders said.

“We’ve got momentum in the Corps of Engineers; we’ve got momentum in our regiment right now that we want to keep,” said Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, 52nd U.S. Army Chief of Engineers. “In fact, we want to get it going absolutely fast. Gen. Shinseki used to talk — when we went to the modular force — about irreversible momentum. Irreversible momentum is very powerful, and you don’t do it because you want your thoughts to stick; you want that irreversible momentum that gives you another 52 Chiefs of Engineers and another hundreds of years of this regiment.”

The key to building this type of momentum is “buy-in” from all levels, Van Antwerp said.

“We’ve got to make sure every one of our Soldiers connects to what we’re doing. Every one of our civilians in the Corps needs to know where they fit in the bigger picture,” Van Antwerp said.

ENFORCE work groups discussed their own pieces of the larger USAES campaign plan, and their communication generated new ideas and improvements.

“You had almost 150 people ... that were in there with passion to debate the issues in all components and in the Fusion Cell there were young leaders in there to talk about the campaign plan and what they see, so to me, this ENFORCE has been a tremendous success,” U.S. Army Engineering School Commandant Brig. Gen. Bryan Watson said. “But it can’t stop here; the next major forum will be the command council in November.”

Engineers can use several tools to stay plugged into the discussions held during ENFORCE, Watson said.

“The Engineer Forum and the Fusion Cell; we brought those two formats to bring the commanders and key leaders across the regiment together,” Watson said. “In the past, it has been kind of willy-nilly in terms of what topics we covered. Now it will go to a particular decisive point. You’re going to get a status, open up a debate, tell you ‘this is what we’re going to do.’”

Engineers can access the discussion through the USAES homepage www.wood.army.mil/wood_cms/usaes.shtml.

Brig. Gen. Bryan Watson, USAES commandant, explains where the results of ENFORCE will take the regiment in the future.



Fort Leonard Wood's Hall of Engineers.

168,000 DoD Employees May Transfer To New Pay Systems By September

By Stephen Losey

The Defense Department hopes to move as many as 168,000 employees out of the National Security Personnel System and back to the General Schedule between May and September.

John James, the new director of the NSPS Transition Office, said in an interview today that transitions will begin in May, after all Defense offices with NSPS employees finish upgrading their information technology systems to handle the switch. James said between 50 percent and 75 percent of the roughly 225,000 NSPS employees will be transferred this fiscal year.

“We’re pushing for the higher number,” James said.

James said the remaining 25 percent, who are almost certain to be transferred out of NSPS in fiscal 2011, will go to other personnel systems besides the GS system. For example, Defense wants to take more time to create special pay flexibilities for physicians, dentists and other medical employees so they can keep extra medical pay NSPS provided.

James said his office does not yet know how many employees transferring to GS have earned large enough pay raises under NSPS to exceed their new grades’ step 10 pay caps. Those employees will have future pay raises reduced by half until their GS grade catches up with their salaries. James’ predecessor, Tim Curry, in December estimated that 4,000 employees could have their raises halved.

James said until agencies throughout Defense finish classifying employees to determine their GS grades, he won’t know how many employees will be affected by the reduced raises.

Federal Managers Association President Darryl Perkinson strongly objects to the Pentagon’s plans, which he said will penalize high-performing employees. He will meet with James March 12 to discuss how to avoid hurting those employees’ future raises.

James said the Pentagon is bound by law and has no choice but to reduce the raises for those affected employees. “It would require a change in the General Schedule rules” to avoid reduced raises, James said.

Perkinson told Federal Times last week that he is prepared to talk to lawmakers on the House and Senate Armed Services committees if FMA and the Pentagon can’t reach a compromise.



2010 Clinton Lake Youth Turkey Hunt

By Kipp Walters

The 2010 Clinton Lake Youth Turkey Hunt was set for April 3, from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

The deadline for applications to be submitted was March 15, and youths needed to be between the ages of 10 and 16 years old.

Of the 13 applications turned in, nine were drawn for the hunt. After selection was made, there were three girls and six boys in the hunt.

Participants were required to attend the mandatory meeting on March 27. Topics covered included rules for the hunt, as well as safety and ethical hunting methods. Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks Game Warden, Andy Terhune also spoke to the group of nine youth hunters and nine adult guides. Youth hunters selected their blind according to the order that they were drawn. Along with their guides, they were shown the locations of their blinds and shown where they could park on the morning of the hunt.

All blinds were set out on the day before the hunt and several pounds of feed corn were strewn about the area immediately surrounding each of the blinds.

The day of the hunt, all the youth hunters and guides were in their blinds by 6:30 a.m. I was sitting in our maintenance building, which is somewhat centrally located, and could hear the turkeys getting active shortly before sunrise, along with an owl, some songbirds, a horse and several neighboring dogs.

I wasn't hearing any shotguns, however.

Two representatives from a Topeka chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation arrived around 10 a.m. and began preparing lunch for the hunt participants. Youth hunters and guides started rolling in for lunch at 11 a.m. Nobody had taken a shot at a turkey. Everyone reported seeing hens or toms at a distance, but nobody was able to get a tom close enough to their blind.

Everyone enjoyed the lunch provided by the NWTf and swapping stories. Some of the stories sounded a

little bit exaggerated, I might add.

One of the adult guides brought a box of very nice, handcrafted turkey calls and gave one to each of the youth hunters and several of the adult guides. This meant that there was about twenty minutes of serious squawking and clucking going on at the maintenance compound.

I spoke to all of the youth hunters during the lunch break, and informally interviewed two of the youngest, a girl and a boy, both 10 years of age.

This was Joliena Albrecht's first time turkey hunting. She learned of the hunt from her Dad (the guy that brought the turkey calls to hand out), who found out about our youth turkey hunt online.

When asked if she was having fun, Joliena replied, "Yes!"

What was her favorite part of turkey hunting? "Waiting for the turkeys in the blind", was her reply.

Would she want to turkey hunt again? Joliena replied "Yes!"

Nick Modes was on his second turkey hunt. I asked Nick how he heard about the youth turkey hunt and he said, "I heard about it from a friend, Jim Bell."

I told him that I knew Jim Bell, a Corps of Engineer Park Ranger at Hillsdale Lake in Kansas. I also told Nick that Jim Bell helped me choose the locations for all of the hunting blinds.

Nick's favorite part of turkey hunting was the hunting part and sitting in the blind.

Nick plans to do more turkey hunting in the future.

We took several group photos and then all the hunters and guides returned to their blinds for afternoon hunting.

After calling everyone that took part in the 2010 Clinton Lake Youth Turkey Hunt, I found that only one youth hunter was able to harvest a young Jake turkey. He proudly said he called it in around 4:30 p.m. with the new hand made turkey call that was given to him.

Youth Hunters, Adult Guides and National Wild Turkey Federation Members.





Volunteers gather up Christmas trees, load them on the boat and transport them to designated areas to be used as fish attracting habitats.

BUILD IT

and *They Will Come*

By Jasen Ballenger

A field of dreams? No, not really...more like a flooded man-made forest of cut pine, fir and spruce trees. For the past 20 years, Clay County Parks Department, with assistance from the Kansas City District, Army Corp of Engineers, has collected discarded Christmas trees at Smithville Lake, Mo., to be used as fish-attracting habitats and as fisherman-attracting hot spots.

Thanks to area residents, 450 cut Christmas trees were dropped off at the lake's boat ramps following this past holiday season, providing an excellent way to recycle a holiday tree. "It's more like 449 trees because I saw a beaver drag one into the lake the other day," said Jasen Ballenger, Clay County Parks Department wildlife manager.

Those involved prepared for a chilly and windy morning on the lake after nearly four inches of over night snowfall, temperatures hovering just under freezing and an 18 to 30 mph north wind.

Volunteers and staff members began drilling, wiring and attaching, five and a half gallon peat pots,

filled with cement, to bundles of the recycled trees.

This year 10 volunteers, mostly fisherman and 10 staff members contributed to the effort. In past years, the event has attracted as many as 70 volunteers and 20 park staff members. It is amazing what a little warmer weather will do! "I heard they were doing this and I wanted to help," said John George of Kansas City, who enjoys crappie fishing at the lake.

Once the bundles of trees were assembled, they were loaded onto barges and transported to likely spots before being dropped into 15 to 20 feet of water. The locations of each drop site were then collected with a global positioning system device and the data was transferred to an aerial map of the lake showing the locations of each crappie bed.

Fisherman can obtain the map at the parks office for no cost. The map contains five years worth of data to the crappie beds locations and hopefully the fish they pursue. "It certainly isn't a guarantee that an angler will catch fish, but

it sure can't hurt the odds!" said Clay County Parks Department superintendent, Mike Driskell, who organized the event.

Fisherman have called them crappie beds for years and the origin of the name is hard to determine as crappies neither sleep nor spawn in them; they just hang out around these structures. Of course, crappies don't have exclusive rights to these beds. Bass, bluegill, channel catfish and an assortment of young fish, minnows, and shad can also be found around them.

Additionally, the Kansas City District staff, along with personnel from the Missouri Department of Conservation, are planning to install more fish attracting structures to the lake this spring. As these 'beds' are placed, the locations will be added to the map.

So, after next holiday season, consider recycling a tree to provide a fish a place to hang out and a place for an angler to try their luck!

Silver Bullet for State Hazards



By Brian Rast

Flood season is upon us.

Imagine this scenario: As a small city's floodplain manager, you're responsible for public safety and awareness of flood hazards. People want to know how much risk they face. Who do you turn to? What agency can provide you the answer your constituents need?

The hazard does not have to be flooding. Communities face a variety of hazards, ranging from prairie fires, to tornados, and even earthquakes along the New Madrid fault. A one stop-shop is needed for state and local communities.

Silver Jackets is a program through which the Corps, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and other federal, state, and local agencies create an interagency team at the state level to develop and implement solutions to state natural hazard priorities.

This is open to all hazards, as mentioned above. Alaska might have hazards related to cold regions. Hawaii would certainly have tsunami hazards.

The Silver Jackets Program provides a formal and consistent strategy for an interagency approach to planning and implementing measures to reduce the risks associated with natural hazards.

The program's primary goals are to:

- leverage information and resources
- improve public risk communication through a united effort
- create a mechanism to collaboratively solve issues and implement initiatives

Traditionally, different agencies wear different colored jackets when responding to emergencies. FEMA personnel wear blue, and Corps personnel wear red. The name Silver Jackets is used to underscore the common mission of the diverse agencies involved.

The program's desired outcomes are:

- Reduced flood risk
- Agencies better understand and leverage each other's programs
- Collaboration between various agencies, coordinated programs with cohesive solutions
- Multi-agency technical resource for state and local agencies
- Mechanism for establishing relationships to facilitate integrated solutions post-disaster

Heat STRESS



Silver Jackets is continuing team development on a state-by-state basis with the ultimate objective of establishing or enhancing an interagency team in every interested state. Each team will include FEMA, the Corps, the State National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) coordinator, and the State Hazard Mitigation Officer (SHMO) as standing members and lead facilitators. The intent is not to duplicate existing teams, but to supplement and strengthen current efforts and establish relationships where they do not yet exist. This is exactly what has happened for Kansas.

The Kansas Hazard Mitigation Team (KHMT) has been in place for several years, including their SHMO, Jacob Gray, and their NFIP coordinator, Tom Morey, a certified floodplain manager (CFM). As the District's Silver Jacket Manager, I met with Tom and Jake in the KHMT forum, Silver Jackets fits in perfectly. We didn't change their name, and we don't want to change their direction. Currently, Kansas is focused on revising the State's mitigation plan, which FEMA requires to be updated periodically. The opportunity to network and enhance relationships helps find the right agency with the right solution, who ever it happens to be.

In Missouri, the State Emergency Management Agency is our main contact. A Silver Jackets team spawned from the Interagency Levee Task Force is beginning. Currently, the St. Louis District is leading the effort, but this will transition to the Kansas City District this year.

John Grothaus, Kansas City District's Flood Risk Management Program Manager, described this year's effort. "Silver Jackets, the supporting of intergovernmental partnerships with interested states, is a funding priority in the Flood Risk Management Program."

Most recently, the Department of Homeland Security has contacted the Kansas City District with geospatial data tools characterizing a variety of hazards and relevant infrastructure addressing them. Information like this is extremely helpful to state agencies and the local municipalities address solutions to the many natural hazards, including flooding.

Spring is here and soon the hot, hot days of summer will follow. Now is a good time to refresh your knowledge of the types of heat stress, symptoms, first aid, and recommendations for prevention.

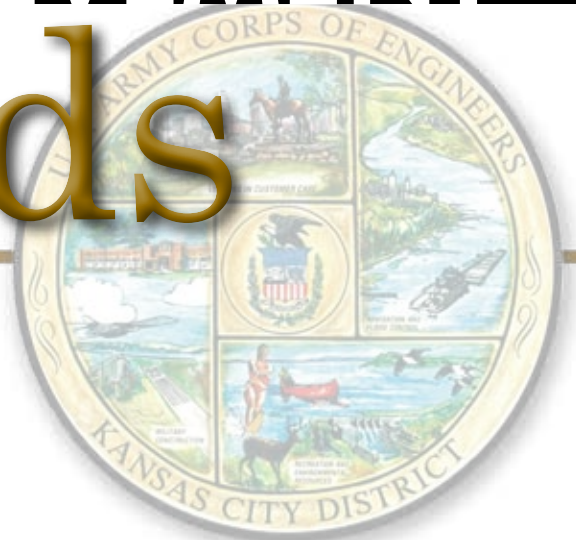
This link to U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine also provides you access to valuable information and training for prevention of heat stress:

Link - <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/heat/>

Workers who are exposed to extreme heat or work in hot environments may be at risk of heat stress. Exposure to extreme heat can result in occupational illnesses and injuries. Heat stress can result in heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps or heat rashes. Heat can also increase the risk of injuries in workers as it may result in sweaty palms, fogged-up safety glasses and dizziness. Burns may also occur as a result of accidental contact with hot surfaces or steam.

Workers at risk of heat stress include outdoor workers and workers in hot environments such as firefighters, bakery workers, farmers, construction workers, miners, boiler room workers, factory workers and others. Workers at greater risk of heat stress include those who are 65 years of age or older, are overweight, have heart disease or high blood pressure, or take medications that may be affected by extreme heat.

SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT Awards



Commander's Award

Gale Ross

Gale Ross served as the Chief of Contracting for an eight-month period, from July 2009 until February 2010. During that time, Gale was instrumental in the successful obligation of a \$1,400,000,000 program for Kansas City District. Gale faced the challenge of awarding \$300,000,000 of contract in support of the historic American Recover and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) work. Additionally, he grew the District's contracting office by adding four additional personnel. Also, Mr. Ross was heavily involved in the successful award of the Ft. Riley hospital. Gale was instrumental in obtaining the approval for the Preplaced Remedial Action Contract (PRAC) acquisition strategy, a very complicated, highly visible \$820,000,000 requirement that required DASA-P approval. His advanced technical knowledge and keen attention to detail were heavily relied upon for the successful approval of this document. Gale's actions as Chief of Contracting boosted efficiency, continuity, and morale of the District.

Eric Brandt
Jeff Bushie
Ted London
Robert Riley
Brandon Tobias

displayed superior performance leading multidisciplinary teams in executing the challenging FY10 Fort Riley Brigade Transformation/Combat Engineer projects. Your outstanding leadership resulted in over 30 in-house design staff simultaneously learning Building Information Modeling (BIM) while completing the design of six buildings and three sites with a programmed amount of \$108 Million within eight months. These exceptional efforts have significantly expanded the technical competence of the Kansas City District.

Achievement Medal

James Pennaz

For your exemplary performance and dedication to the 2009 Combined Federal Campaign. As the lead project manager for the CFC Steering Committee you are officially commended for the leadership and support given to the Kansas City District's 2009 CFC. Due to your exemplary leadership abilities the CFC goal of \$85,000 was exceeded by \$15,000 with total contributions exceeding \$100,000. Your efforts as the Chair of the CFC Steering Committee contributed to our District setting records in pledges, employee participation, and fundraising events. Your efforts resulted not only in a profitable campaign but a fun and employee morale lifting experience. Your achievements reflect great credit upon yourself, the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Defense.

*Nicole Berry
Brad Brack
Carl Broyles
Wade Cunningham
Mary Delaet
Lytrees Hampton
Jenny Hu
Jerry Leinbach
Angela Loewen
Jordan Lockwood
Brett Meyring*

*Paul Muller
Aric Naeger
Keith Person
Mian Rehman
Chris Sickler
Nicole Siebenmorgen
Kenny Simmons
Dan Winkel
John Wilkus
Allison Wiltz*

displayed superior performance in executing the challenging FY10 Fort Riley Brigade Transformation/Combat Engineer projects. Your outstanding accomplishment contributed directly to the PDT of in-house design staff simultaneously learning Building Information Modeling (BIM) while executing the design of six buildings and three sites with a programmed amount of \$108 Million within eight months. These exceptional efforts have significantly expanded the technical competence of the Kansas City District.

Certificate of Appreciation

Kansas City District

For your support to the Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth from August 2007 to October 2009. The outstanding men and women of the Corps of Engineers make a daily impact by constantly improving quality of life and operations through their design, construction, repair and renovation of our infrastructure. With your help, Fort Leavenworth is the best hometown in the Army. Thanks!

Signed

Philip F. Johndrow, Command Sergeant Major

William B. Caldwell IV, Lt. Gen., Commanding

Heartland Award

*Dan Hall
Gary Harden
John Maxwell
Jason Myers
Jim Mehnert
Joe Quilty
Dave Roberts
Patrick Schaub
Larry Ward*

displayed superior skill in executing the challenging FY10 Fort Riley Brigade Transformation/Combat Engineer projects. Your outstanding teamwork directly resulted in the PDT of in-house design staff simultaneously learning Building Information Modeling (BIM) while executing the design of six buildings and three sites with a programmed amount of \$108 Million within eight months. These exceptional efforts have resulted in significantly expanding the technical competence of the Kansas City District.



Around the District. . .

(Top-Left) Ann Ewy presents the Heartland Award to the Corporate Kids Day Care Center. (Top-Right) Lt. Col. Michael Fitzgerald, (Bottom-Left) George Hill and (Bottom-Right) Karim Williams say goodbye at their Open Houses.